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Saturday, November 8 2025





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COLUMBUS SYMPHONY INFORMATION

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A NOTE FROM THE CONDUCTOR

Greetings, and welcome to this performance by the Columbus Symphony Orchestra.

Let me ask you a question: Why are you here?

There are many answers to this question, some better than others. (I love music. Good. I was trapped into it by my significant other. Not quite as good, but okay.)

Here are some reasons why we respond to music and, therefore, seek to hear it:

1. Listening to music releases “pleasure chemicals” like dopamine, among others, into a key part of our brain’s reward system. (Why go on? Okay, we will.)
2. Music transcends walls and boundaries with its universal language.
3. Music can help reduce anxiety and depression.
4. Music allows you to experience the full range of human emotions.
5. Music can lighten the mood.
6. Music can stave off fatigue and improve our response to pain.
7. Music can bring back memories.
8. All that and much, much more.

Whatever the reason for your presence at this concert, we are most happy to see you, to play for you, and to help make live orchestral music a meaningful part of your life. Come back soon.

George Del Gobbo,
Music Director & Conductor



Young George was always interested in music. From his earliest years he preferred musical toys. This proclivity remained undefined until the seventh grade when he decided he wanted to play the violin in the school orchestra. This turn down the dark path was sealed when he began studying the violin privately. It was a short step from there to the decision to make music his life, and his fate was sealed when he made the irrevocable choice to become an orchestra conductor. He was fortunate to attend the Eastman School of Music for five years on a four-year scholarship. (To date no statues of him have been erected outside that school.) From there it was on to a stint with the U.S. Army Band in Washington, D.C and simultaneously the graduate school at Catholic University. After leaving the army, it was on to Rome, Italy and the tutelage of Maestro Franco Ferrara at the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia. After a dozen years working with the Fort Worth Symphony and Ballet, he came to Columbus and discovered the orchestra, the people, and the city that would enrich his life forever.



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ABOUT THE CONCERTMASTER



Kerren Berz's talents span the musical spectrum. She has performed, recorded, and toured with the Atlanta Symphony, the Harlem Festival Orchestra, and the Nashville Chamber Orchestra, whose "music without boundaries" mission produced critically acclaimed performances and recordings of music by Aaron Copland, Conni Ellisor, and John Jorgenson. She performs regularly with the Georgia Symphony, Atlanta Pops, the Pullman Pops, and orchestras in Chattanooga, LaGrange, and throughout the southeast.

Her ensemble Sonic Essence regularly performs multi genre music and interactive performances for concert series and corporate events. Other performances include a national tour with Amy Grant and Vince Gill, and shows with Stevie Wonder, Joni Mitchell, The Eagles, Earth Wind and Fire, and many other iconic artists.

As a music arranger and performer, Kerren Berz has worked with Kristian Bush (Sugarland), and is featured on albums by Outkast, Goodie Mob, Pink, Sinéad O'Connor, and on the hit single "Survivor," by Destiny's Child. Ms. Berz is a voting member of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences and has served on nominating committees in the Classical categories for the annual Grammy Awards.

She has degrees from Florida State University, where she studied with Eliot Chapo, and the University of Tennessee-Chattanooga, with additional studies at Boston University and with Israeli violinist Yair Kless. She credits her public school music program with giving her the opportunity to play the violin.

As a music educator, Ms. Berz has worked with the Columbus Urban League, TORCH Academy, the Youth Orchestra of Greater Columbus, and strings students throughout the Atlanta area. She is currently on faculty at Georgia Perimeter College, The Atlanta Music Project, and The Lovett School.

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CONCERT TIPS

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Ushers are available to take your tickets, provide you with a program, and direct you to and from your seat.

Restrooms are located in the RiverCenter lobby. Ushers can help direct you to the closest restroom.

Smoking and vaping are not allowed inside the building.

Lost and Found: If you lose an item in the theatre, please notify an usher. Items may be turned in to the RiverCenter Security.

Arrive Early: Although there are occasions when arriving later is considered stylish, a concert isn't one of them. Once the music has begun, latecomers will be asked to remain in the lobby until the first performance break.

Phones: Flash photography and noise disturbances are strictly prohibited. We love engaging with our audience on social media so feel free to check-in on Facebook and take selfies and photos PRIOR to the performance. Before the concert starts, be sure to silence your phone and turn down those brightness settings.

Quiet Company: Unless the concert is deemed a "sing-a-long", you will want to leave the music making to the ensemble... even if you really do know the whole first movement of Beethoven's Seventh. The people around you probably know it too and would rather hear the orchestra's rendition. Silence all cell phones, alarms, or other audible devices before the concert begins.

Applause: Don't know when to clap and cheer? We can make it easy! In classical music concerts, applause is usually held until the conductor faces the audience. Some pieces contain several movements and there will be a brief applause-less pause between them. If you ever feel the overwhelming need to clap and cheer between movements... the orchestra won't mind the appreciation!

Enjoy Each Note: You may simply want to avoid the crowd by leaving five minutes early, but the musicians may mistake that as a sign of disapproval. Sit back, relax, and enjoy every last note!



RiverCenter for the Performing Arts, a 501c3 not-for-profit entity, proudly supports the Columbus Symphony Orchestra as a resident company through generous in-kind donations which include rent-free office and meeting space, reduced fees for use of performance spaces and related services and amenities for the benefit of the Orchestra. For information on renting the facility and how to support the work of RiverCenter, please call 706-256-3607 or visit www.rivercenter.org



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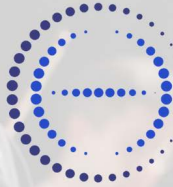
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Musicians employed in this production are represented by the American Federation of Musicians of the United States and Canada.

The CSO uses the revolving seating method for section string players who are listed alphabetically in the roster.

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Monique Gunnels, Flute

James Taylor, Principal Trumpet

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COLUMBUS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
George Del Gobbo, Music Director & Conductor
The Dr. & Mrs. Steven Leichter Chair

Saturday, November 8 2025 | 7:30PM

PROGRAM

Florence Price

Adoration

arr. Steve Olsen

Felix Mendelssohn

Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64

Lun Li, violin

Intermission-

Johannes Brahms

Symphony No. 1, in C Minor Op. 68

I. Un poco sostenuto - Allegro - Meno allegro

II. Andante sostenuto

III. Un poco allegretto e grazioso

IV. Adagio - Più andante - Allegro non troppo,
ma con brio - Più allegro

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Lun Li, violin

Violinist Lun Li is committed to creating thought-provoking, boundary-pushing concert experiences for contemporary audiences around the world. A native of Shanghai, China, he won the 2021 Young Concert Artists Susan Wadsworth International Auditions, along with The Paul A. Fish Memorial Prize, the Buffalo Chamber Music Society Prize, and was named John French Violin Chair at YCA.

He has appeared as concerto soloist with the Bangor Symphony, Kennett Square Symphony, Colgate University Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra of the Springs, Meridian

Symphony, the Salina Symphony, and the McCall Summer Festival Orchestra, as well as with the Brevard Philharmonic, Aiken Symphony, University of South Carolina Symphony, Salisbury Symphony, and the Riverside Symphony at Alice Tully Hall. Upcoming concerto appearances include the Kyoto Symphony and Osaka Symphony.

He made his New York recital debut at Merkin Concert Hall and his Washington, D.C. recital debut at The Kennedy Center's Terrace Theater, both presented by Young Concert Artists. Recent recital and chamber music highlights include The Morgan Library & Museum, Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts, Brookings Chamber Music Society, Brooklyn Chamber Music Society, Port Washington Library, Bay Chamber Concerts, Tippet Rise Art Center, as well as appearances with the Jupiter Chamber Players. He also collaborated with Pulitzer Prize-winning composer, vocalist, and multi-instrumentalist Du Yun at the Asia Society in New York City.

In the upcoming season, Lun will be a featured artist on the opening night of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center at Alice Tully Hall. He is a member of the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's prestigious Bowers Program and has toured extensively with the Society, including a recent tour in China.

Internationally, Lun has performed at Konzerthaus Berlin, Kulturpalast Dresden, and Wiener Konzerthaus. He has also toured with the Curtis Institute of Music and Musicians from Marlboro, appearing at Carnegie Hall, Merkin Hall, and the 92nd Street Y.

A passionate chamber musician, Lun has participated in the Marlboro Music Festival, Verbier Festival Academy, Music@Menlo's International Program, and Music from Angelfire. He has collaborated with artists including Kim Kashkashian, Ani Kavafian, Ida Kavafian, Marcy Rosen, Steven Tenenbom, Peter Wiley, and members of the Calidore, Doric, and Miro Quartets.

Lun holds a Bachelor of Music degree from the Curtis Institute of Music, a Master of Music degree and an Artist Diploma from The Juilliard School, where he served as teaching assistant to Catherine Cho. His principal mentors include Ida Kavafian, Catherine Cho, and Joseph Lin.

He performs on the Stradivarius "Samazeuilh" 1735 violin, on generous loan from the Nippon Music Foundation.

PROGRAM NOTES

Adoration

Florence Price (1887-1953)

Florence Price was a trailblazing American composer whose work bridged the European classical tradition with the rich musical heritage of African American spirituals and folk idioms. Born in Little Rock, Arkansas, Price demonstrated prodigious musical talent from an early age and later studied at the New England Conservatory of Music, where she majored in organ and piano. In 1933, Price achieved historic recognition when her Symphony No. 1 in E minor became the first orchestral piece by an African American woman performed by a major U.S. orchestra—the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Her music is distinguished by warmth, lyricism, and a creative fusion of Romantic expressiveness with distinctly American rhythmic and melodic character.

Adoration was originally written in 1951 for organ but has since been arranged for many different instruments. Tonight's performance features that of a string orchestra—an ideal medium for expressing the piece's warmth and peaceful reverence. Price was most popular for her songs and spirituals and possessed a gift for creating profound beauty within a brief, contemplative piece. Adoration provides a wonderful example of this talent in the form of a tender, lyrical meditation lasting only a few minutes long.

Violin Concerto in E Minor, Op. 64

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Premiered on March 13, 1845 in Leipzig with soloist Ferdinand David and conductor Niels W. Gade

Felix Mendelssohn was one of the most gifted and versatile composers of the early Romantic era. A prodigy from a cultured German family, Mendelssohn displayed astonishing musical ability as both composer and pianist from an early age, writing mature works while still a teenager—including the sparkling Overture to A Midsummer Night's Dream. Over his brief but prolific life, he excelled as a composer, conductor, pianist, and educator, helping to revive interest in earlier masters such as J.S. Bach. As conductor of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, he elevated it to one of Europe's finest ensembles, and in 1843, founded the Leipzig Conservatory, which became a leading center for musical training. His output—including four symphonies, two piano concertos, the Violin Concerto in E minor, several oratorios, overtures, chamber works, and piano music—reflect a refined blend of Classical balance and Romantic lyricism.

Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto in E minor, Op. 64, completed in 1844,

stands as one of the most beloved and enduring concertos in the repertoire. The piece was written for his close friend Ferdinand David, concertmaster of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra. Mendelssohn's meticulous craftsmanship is evident in his long correspondence with David, in which he sought practical advice on violin technique. Breaking with classical convention, Mendelssohn placed

the soloist's entrance almost immediately after a brief orchestral introduction and eliminated pauses between movements—innovations that deeply influenced later Romantic concertos.

The first movement opens with a restless undercurrent of eighth notes in the orchestra and the introduction of the violin's tender yet intense main theme. The orchestra echoes the main theme and is followed by virtuosic displays in the violin that lead seamlessly to the delicate second theme. The soloist's rhythmic energy builds to a climax before subsiding with wandering eighth notes. After a stunning cadenza in the violin, the orchestra returns quietly with the main theme, guiding the violin into a revisitation of earlier melodies. The movement concludes in a blaze of passion and drive—the final note held on a fermata by the bassoon awaiting a seamless connection to the next movement.

The slow second movement offers a striking contrast with its intimate calm and lyrical beauty. The violin sings a gentle, songlike melody over quiet strings, evoking a sense of tender melancholy and serene warmth. A more agitated middle section marked by virtuosic doublestops in the violin introduces a darker tension before the opening theme returns. As a whole, the long, flowing lines of the movement result in a deeply expressive interlude that invites quiet reflection amid the concerto's broader drama.

Continuing without pause, the final movement begins with a slow but anticipatory introduction by the soloist. The orchestra then bursts forth in exuberant spirit as the violinist playfully introduces the main theme, a buoyant, dancing melody that captures Mendelssohn's characteristic lightness and charm. The orchestra accompanies with sparkling energy, propelling the music through brilliant exchanges and joyful leaps of rhythm. While the technical demands are high, the mood remains effortless and radiant, brimming with optimism. As the concerto races to its jubilant conclusion, the violin's quicksilver passagework leaves the listener with a sense of pure exhilaration.

Symphony No. 1 in C Minor, Op. 68

Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Premiered on November 4, 1876 in Karlsruhe, Germany with conductor
Felix Otto Dessoff

Johannes Brahms was one of the towering figures of the Romantic era, celebrated for his mastery of structure, depth of emotion, and rich compositional writing. Born in Hamburg, Germany, he showed prodigious musical talent from an early age and supported his family by playing the piano in local dance halls and other places of entertainment while

developing as a composer. His early career was profoundly shaped by his friendship with Robert and Clara Schumann, who championed his genius and encouraged his artistic growth. Brahms would go on to compose in nearly every major genre—symphonies, concertos, chamber works, piano music, and choral pieces—all marked by a deep sense of craftsmanship and expressive intensity. Balancing Classical form with Romantic passion, he became, in the eyes of many, the musical heir to Beethoven.

Brahms labored over his Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68 for nearly two decades, wrestling with the immense legacy of Beethoven's symphonic achievements. He once remarked, "You don't know what it is like to walk in the footsteps of a giant." Early sketches of the symphony date to the 1850s, but it was not completed until 1876, when Brahms was in his early forties. The dramatic C-minor symphony was immediately recognized as a monumental work, and drew many comparisons to Beethoven's symphonies. The work, however, firmly established Brahms' own symphonic voice—one of rigorous structure, rhythmic vitality, and profound emotional depth.

The first movement opens with a somber and imposing introduction: pounding timpani, brooding harmonies, and gathering tension. This slow and weighty opening leads to the vigorous main section, where the strings and winds engage in restless rhythmic interplay. The movement's development unfolds with relentless drive, its intensity sustained through intricate counterpoint and shifting moods. A recurring rhythmic motif—three short notes followed by one long—serves as a unifying thread. The ending is marked by a powerful and serious coda, a fitting conclusion to an ominous and defiant movement.

The second movement offers a lyrical respite from the preceding drama. The strings introduce a warm, flowing melody, soon joined by the winds in tender dialogue. Stunning phrasing in the solo winds evoke introspection and longing. As rich, expressive melodies develop, harmonic shifts and dark undertones hint at a deeper emotional complexity than first suggested. Near the ending, a beautiful violin solo emerges, adding an intimate, almost vocal quality to the texture.

The third movement replaces the traditional scherzo with a charming intermezzo. A lilting clarinet melody sets the tone, soon taken up by the strings with delicate phrasing and lightness. The rhythmic energy increases, leading to a middle section in 6/8 time marked by a noble and dancing character. The graceful buoyancy of the first section returns with the main theme, concluding with a polite and understated ending.

The final movement begins with a slow and mysterious introduction that grows in agitation before utterly melting away in a glorious shift of character with ethereal horn and flute solos. Out of this atmosphere arises a broad, noble melody introduced by the strings—a soaring tune, strikingly similar to Beethoven's "Ode to Joy," symbolizing triumph emerging from struggle. The movement continues confidently with boisterous vitality and lyrical beauty, driving toward an epic conclusion that resolves the symphony's opening tension.



GLOSSARY OF MUSICAL TERMS

Cadenza (It. Cadenza): an improvised or written-out decorative passage performed by a soloist, with accompaniment, usually near the end of a concerto movement.

Concerto (fr. Lat. Concertare, to contend): a composition for featured instrument(s) and orchestra often cast in three movements marked fast-slow-fast. The contrast in sound between the soloist(s) and the large ensemble is the principal characteristic of the genre.

Concerto grosso (It. large concerto): a type of concerto common to the Baroque era in which a small group of solo instruments (concertino) is contrasted to the large ensemble (ripieno)

Finale (Lat. Finalis, to end): the name sometimes given to the last movement of a longer composition.

Minuet: a stately court dance in three-four time which is often used as the third movement of the classical symphony. It was replaced in the nineteenth century by the scherzo and other dance-like movements.

Movement: an independent section of a larger work, usually separated by a brief pause.

Opus (Lat. Opus, work): a number assigned to a musical composition either by the composer or by the work's publisher (abbreviated as Op.)

Orchestra: the generic name for an ensemble of diverse instruments. The modern orchestra includes instruments from the four major groups: strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion.

Rondo: a musical form in which a theme recurs three or more times with each occurrence separated by a contrasting episode.

Scherzo (It. Scherzo, joke): a fast moving piece, usually in triple meter. Scherzos became common with the symphonies of Beethoven and eventually replaced the Minuet.

Suite: a succession of related movements, often dance inspired, sometimes extracted from larger works.

Symphony (Gr. Symphonia, sounding together): an elaborate musical composition for full orchestra, typically in four movements

Tempo: Many words are used to designate the speed and/or character of a piece of music. Here are some of the most commonly encountered terms for tempo and style modifiers:

Adagio: on the slow side

Allegretto: a fairly brisk tempo

Allegro: "lively," the most common indication for a fast tempo

Andante: "to walk or go," interpreted as moderately slow.

Andantino: a bit faster than Andante

Cantabile: in a singing fashion

con brio: with spirit and vivacity

con fuoco: with fire

con moto: with movement

Grave: more a style than speed, but often interpreted as slow and serious

Grazioso: graceful

Largo: broad or large, usually taken in a slow and dignified style

Lento: slow

Maestoso: majestically

meno: less

molto: much

mosso: moved

non troppo: not too much

piu: more

poco: little

Presto: very fast, sometimes modified as Prestissimo, meaning as fast as possible.

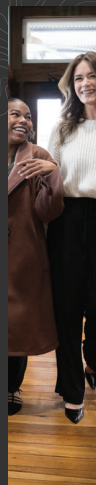
Scherzando: lightheartedly

Sostenuto: in a sustained manner

Vivace: "vivacious," a lively and brisk manner

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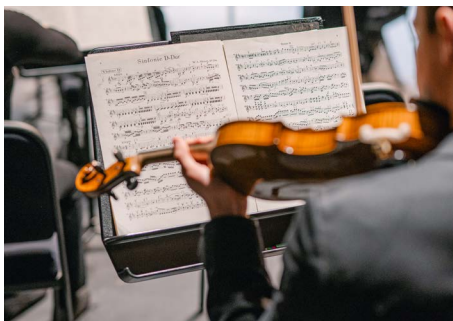
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